

NURSE QUALIFICATION STANDARD

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: To revise Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy on the qualification standard for all persons appointed as Registered Nurses (RNs) under Chapter 73 or 74 of Title 38, United States Code.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES: Major features of the qualification standard include:

a. New education and performance requirements.

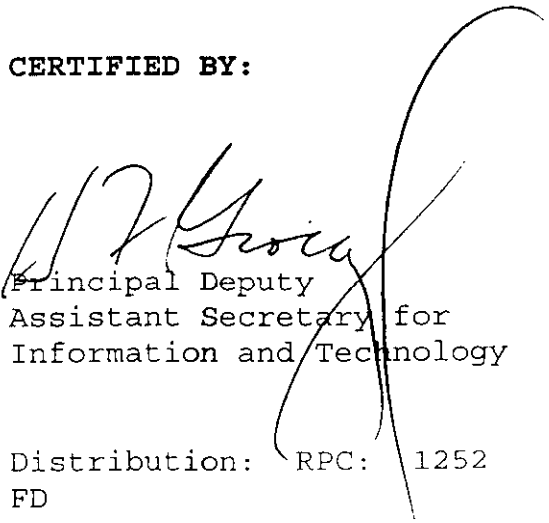
b. Elimination of levels within Nurse IV and V.

3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: The Customer Advisory and Consulting Group (051) is responsible for the contents of this Directive.

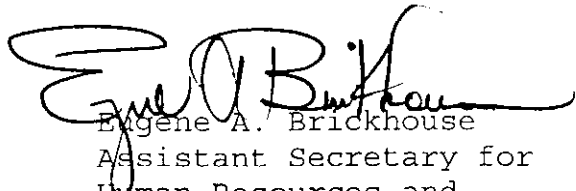
4. RELATED DIRECTIVE: A revision to VA Directive 5103.9, Locality Pay System, will be issued under separate cover. Appropriate changes to MP-5, Part II, Chapter 2, Appointments and Chapter 5, Advancements and Cash and Honor Awards, and the VHA Supplements to these chapters will also be issued under separate cover.

5. RESCISSION: VA Directive 5103.9, Appendix C, Nurse Qualification Standard dated March 5, 1999, and MP-5, Part II, Chapter 2, Appendix F, Nurse Qualification Standard, dated October 30, 1998, are rescinded effective June 17, 2000.

CERTIFIED BY:


Principal Deputy
Assistant Secretary for
Information and Technology

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**


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Assistant Secretary for
Human Resources and
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NURSE QUALIFICATION STANDARD

1. PURPOSE: This Directive establishes a revision to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Nurse Qualification Standard. It applies to all persons appointed as Registered Nurses (RNs) under Chapter 73 or 74 of Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.)

2. POLICY

a. The Nurse Qualification Standard ensures VA RNs are educationally prepared to:

(1) provide high quality health care to veterans across the full range of current clinical practice roles and settings; and

(2) evolve professionally as VA continues its transformation from a hospital-based system to one that delivers most of its care in outpatient, home and community settings and that focuses on primary care and care management.

b. The standard will be used to appoint, promote, reassign, or advance RNs appointed under Chapter 73 or 74 of Title 38, U.S.C., including RNs appointed on fee or without compensation (WOC) basis.

c. The new education requirements apply to RNs appointed on or after December 10, 1999. RNs appointed before December 10, 1999 are covered by the new education requirements effective October 1, 2005. This provides current RNs the opportunity to obtain the education necessary for advancement under the revised qualification standard. RNs on VA rolls as of December 10, 1999 will not be reduced in grade if they do not meet the new educational requirements for their current grade or level.

d. The standard identifies nine performance requirements called "dimensions." These "dimensions" specify standards of performance at each grade and/or level. The new performance requirements apply to RNs appointed on or after December 10, 1999. For RNs appointed before December 10 1999, the new performance requirement will be implemented effective June 18, 2000. The additional time is being provided to allow supervisors to provide guidance to employees during regularly scheduled performance reviews.

e. Appointments

(1) Effective on or after December 10, 1999, individuals appointed to VA RN positions will be subject to all qualification requirements stated in the revised Nurse Qualification Standard. These requirements apply to:

(a) Individuals not on VA rolls, and

(b) VA employees in other positions who are appointed or reappointed as RNs.

(2) RNs with a break in service of more than one day who are subsequently considered for the same or different RN position are subject to the revised Nurse Qualification Standard requirements.

f. Promotions and advancements

(1) Until June 17, 2000, RNs appointed before December 10, 1999 are to be considered for advancement under the procedures in MP-5, Part II, Chapter 5, Advancements and Cash and Honor Awards, dated October 30, 1998, and the VHA Supplement to chapter 5. Such consideration will be based on the requirements in VA Manual MP-5, Part II, Chapter 2, Appendix F, Nurse Qualification Standard, dated October 30, 1998.

(2) From June 18, 2000 to September 30, 2005, RNs appointed before December 10, 1999 will be considered for promotion in accordance with the procedures in MP-5, part II, chapter 5, and the VHA Supplement to chapter 5. Such consideration will be based on interim education requirements and the nine "dimensions" contained in the revised Nurse Qualification Standard. (See Appendix A-Interim Educational Requirements for RNs).

(3) Effective October 1, 2005, all VA RNs will be considered for promotion and advancement in accordance with the procedures in MP-5, part II, chapter 5; the VHA Supplement to chapter 5; and the revised Nurse Qualification Standard.

(4) RNs appointed before December 10, 1999 who maintain continuous employment in VHA as a RN will not be reduced in grade based on application of the revised Nurse Qualification Standard.

(5) The Under Secretary for Health or designee is authorized to act upon requests for promotion reconsideration for RNs.

g. Periodic step increases: Periodic step increases will continue to be processed in accordance with the VA Manual MP-5, Part II, Chapter 3, Pay Administration; VHA Supplement to MP-5, part II, chapter 5 and MP-6, Part V, Supplement 1.5, PAID Personnel Operating Instructions.

(1) RNs appointed before December 10, 1999 will not be denied a periodic step increase on the basis of not meeting the educational requirements for their current grade.

(2) All key nursing personnel at the maximum step rate for Level 1 of Nurse IV and Nurse V at the time this directive is implemented December 10, 1999, shall be granted a periodic step increase, provided they have completed the required waiting period (104 weeks of creditable service) and demonstrated an acceptable level of competence. See VHA Supplement MP-5, part II, chapter 5, paragraph 5.12.

(3) Upon implementation of this directive, Nurse Executives at the maximum step rate for Level I of Nurse IV or Nurse V become eligible for additional step rates as part of the annual review process. See Paragraph 2e, Part 5, VA Handbook 5103.9, Pay Locality System, dated March 5, 1999.

h. Transfer and reassignment: RNs appointed before December 10, 1999 will not be subject to the new educational requirements until October 1, 2005, for the purpose of transfer or reassignment to another position at the same grade. All RN's appointed on or after December 10, 1999 will be required to met the revised educational requirements for transfer or reassignment.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. The **Under Secretary for Health or designee** shall issue such regulations and policies as deemed necessary to implement the revised Nurse Qualification Standard covered by this Directive.

b. The **Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management** shall provide advice and assistance on matters covered by this Directive.

4. REFERENCES

MP-5, part II, chapters 2, 3 and 5 and VHA Supplements thereto

MP-6, part V, supplement 1.5

Title 38 U.S.C. Chapters 73 and 74

Title 38 U.S.C. Section 512

VA Directive and VA Handbook 5103.9, Locality Pay System

November 10, 1999

VA Directive 5102.1
APPENDIX A

INTERIM EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR RNs

From June 18, 2000 to September 30, 2005, RNs appointed before December 10, 1999 will be considered for promotion in accordance with the procedures in MP-5, part II, chapter 5, and the VHA Supplement to chapter 5. Such consideration will be based on the following Interim Educational Requirements for RNs and the nine "dimensions" contained in the revised Nurse Qualification Standard. A waiver of accreditation and/or degree requirements can be found in Appendix B, paragraph 4.

Minimum Requirements for:	Education
Nurse I Level 2	Associate degree or diploma in nursing
Nurse I Level 3	Associate degree or diploma in nursing
Nurse II	Associate degree or diploma in nursing
Nurse III	Baccalaureate degree in nursing from NLNAC/CCNE-accredited program
Nurse IV	Master's degree in nursing or related field with a BSN from a NLNAC/CCNE accredited program
Nurse V	Master's degree in nursing or related field with a BSN from a NLNAC/CCNE accredited program

NURSE QUALIFICATION STANDARD

1. COVERAGE. Requirements for appointment as a Registered Nurse (RN) in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) are as follows. These requirements apply to all RNs appointed under Chapter 73 or 74 of Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.), including RNs appointed on a without compensation (WOC) appointment or fee basis.

2. BASIC REQUIREMENTS

a. **Citizenship.** Citizen of the United States (U.S.). Noncitizens may be appointed when no qualified U.S. citizens are available in accordance with regulations issued by the Under Secretary for Health or designee.

b. Graduation from School of Nursing

(1) Graduate of a school of professional nursing approved by the appropriate State accrediting agency at the time the program was completed by the applicant.

(2) Lists of approved schools of nursing may be obtained from:

(a) The National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC), an accrediting arm of the National League for Nursing located at 61 Broadway, 33rd Floor, New York, New York 10006 or call (800) 669-1656 extension 153. Additional information may be obtained from the NLNAC web site www.accrediting-comm-nlnac.org; **or**

(b) The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), an accrediting arm of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). CCNE is located at One Dupont Circle N.W., Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036 or call (202) 463-6930. The web site address for AACN/CCNE is www.aacn.nche.edu.

(3) In cases of graduates of foreign schools of professional nursing, possession of current, full, active, and unrestricted registration (see paragraph c below, Registration) will meet the requirement of graduation from an approved school of professional nursing.

(4) Degrees as specified shall be from colleges or universities with degree programs for graduate nurses fully accredited by the NLNAC or CCNE at the time the degree was granted, which could be temporarily or provisionally accredited during the period such accreditation was offered.

November 10, 1999

c. Registration

(1) **Condition of Employment.** A nurse will have a current, full, active and unrestricted registration as a graduate professional nurse in a State, Territory, or Commonwealth (i.e., Puerto Rico) of the U.S. or in the District of Columbia. The appointing official may waive this registration if the RN is to serve in a country other than the U.S. and the RN has registration in that country (e.g., Philippines). *The RN must maintain a current, full, active and unrestricted registration to continue employment with VA.*

(2) **Impaired Registration.** Any registration(s) revoked, suspended, denied, restricted, limited, or issued/placed in a probationary status. A nurse who has or ever had any such impairment to their registration as listed above may be appointed only in accordance with regulations issued by the Under Secretary for Health or designee.

d. Physical Standards. See MP-5, Part II, Chapter 10, Physical Requirements.

e. English Language Proficiency. RNs appointed to direct patient care positions must be proficient in spoken and written English as required by 38 U.S.C. 7402(d) and 7407(d).

3. GRADE REQUIREMENTS. (Paragraph 3 does not apply to the Assistant Chief Medical Director [ACMD] for Nursing Programs appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7306).

a. Successful Nursing Practice. Documented evidence of a candidate's experience as a RN that is determined to be of an acceptable level of quality. This may include experience as a Graduate Nurse Technician (GNT) provided the candidate was utilized as a professional nurse and passed the State licensing (board) examination on the first attempt. It may also include experience as a Nurse Technician Pending Graduation provided the candidate possessed an active, current registration to practice nursing in a State and was utilized as a professional nurse. (See VHA Supplement, MP-5, pt II, ch.2, par. 2.29a(2)) Professional nursing experience should be documented on VA Form 10-2850a, Application for Employment - Nurses and Nurse Anesthetists, or on a candidate's resume.

b. Length of Nursing Practice (Experience). The amount of time documented on VA Form 10-2850a or on a candidate's resume. (A performance evaluation or reference covering the candidate's most recent employment as a RN is essential.) Part-time experience as a RN is credited according to the relationship it bears to the full-time workweek. For example, a RN who worked 20 hours a week (i.e., on a half-time basis) would receive one full-time workweek of credit for each 2 weeks of such service.

c. Degree in a Related Field. Baccalaureate and graduate degrees in fields related to nursing from a college or university which was accredited by the state at the time the candidate completed the program. Information on accredited colleges and universities is contained in Accredited Institutions of Post-secondary Education, published annually by the American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle NW, Washington, DC 20036 or call (202) 939-9300. Information can be obtained from NLNAC's web site (<http://www accrediting-comm-nlnac.org>)

d. Level Within a Grade. The Locality Pay System (LPS) recognizes that some employees at the Nurse I grade have higher qualifications assignments than other employees within the same grade. The qualification requirements for attainment of a higher level within the Nurse I grade are contained in paragraph f, Grade Determinations, below.

e. Nine Dimensions of Nursing. Nine criteria define the performance requirements for RNs at each grade and/or level in the Nurse Qualification Standard. These requirements listed below, are based on the American Nurses Association (ANA) Standards of Care and Standards of Professional Performance.

(1) **Practice.** Extent to which the RN effectively uses the nursing process components of assessment, diagnosis, outcome identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation in varied practice settings.

(2) **Quality of Care.** Extent to which the RN systematically evaluates and improves the quality and effectiveness of nursing practice and health care delivery.

(3) **Performance.** Extent to which the RN evaluates his/her own nursing practice as well as the performance of others.

(4) **Education/Career Development.** Extent to which the RN acquires and uses current knowledge for self and others.

(5) **Collegiality.** Extent to which the RN contributes to the professional development of peers, colleagues, and others.

(6) **Ethics.** Extent to which the RN makes decisions and takes action in an ethical manner.

(7) **Collaboration.** Extent to which the RN collaborates with clients, significant others, and other health care and service providers.

(8) **Research.** Extent to which the RN uses research in practice.

(9) **Resource Utilization.** Extent to which the RN considers factors related to safety, effectiveness, and cost in planning and delivering care.

f. **Grade Determinations.** In addition to the Basic Requirements specified in paragraph 2 above, the following criteria must be met in determining the grade assignment of candidates, and if appropriate, the level within a grade. With regard to the "dimension" requirements, the requirements for all "dimensions" at a particular grade/level must be met in order for a RN to be qualified at that particular grade/level.

(1) Nurse I Level 1

Scope: Delivers fundamental, knowledge-based care to assigned clients while developing technical competencies.

EDUCATION	EXPERIENCE	DIMENSION REQUIREMENTS
Associate Degree or Diploma (State approved or NLNAC accredited)	None	<p>1. Practice: Uses the nursing process (assessment, diagnosis, outcome identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation). Accurately documents care of clients.</p> <p>2. Quality of Care: Describes the quality improvement process, roles and responsibilities, and identifies quality improvement activities on the unit.</p> <p>3. Performance: Participates in appraisal of own performance.</p> <p>4. Education/Career Development: Seeks opportunities to acquire and develop basic skills.</p> <p>5. Collegiality: Establishes professional relationships with peers. Seeks out colleagues for mutual information exchange.</p> <p>6. Ethics: Safeguards client privacy and confidentiality. Provides care in a non-judgmental, non-discriminatory manner, respecting the values and beliefs of members of all cultures.</p> <p>7. Collaboration: Communicates with clients and other healthcare providers regarding client care.</p> <p>8. Research: Assists in identifying problem areas in nursing practice.</p> <p>9. Resource Utilization: Provides care in a safe and cost-effective manner.</p>

NOTE: As used in this and subsequent tables, "Experience" refers to total years of successful nursing practice rather than experience at current grade level.

(2) Nurse I Level 2

Scope: Demonstrates integration of biopsychosocial concepts, cognitive skills, and technically competent practice in providing care to clients with basic or complex needs.

EDUCATION	EXPERIENCE	DIMENSION REQUIREMENTS
Associate Degree or Diploma (State approved or NLNAC accredited)	Approx. 1 year	<p>1. Practice: Demonstrates competency using the nursing process in providing care for clients. Directs others who provide care.</p> <p>2. Quality of Care: Uses quality improvement findings to guide and direct own practice.</p> <p>3. Performance: Incorporates feedback regarding performance and interpersonal skills to enhance professional development. Participates in the performance evaluations of others.</p>
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) (NLNAC or CCNE accredited)	None	<p>4. Education/Career Development: Seeks knowledge and skills appropriate to the practice setting to improve performance.</p> <p>5. Collegiality: Shares knowledge/skills with colleagues/others.</p> <p>6. Ethics: Assumes responsibility and accountability for individual nursing judgments and actions. Acts as a client advocate.</p> <p>7. Collaboration: Participates effectively on teams to plan and manage client care.</p> <p>8. Research: Demonstrates awareness of research application to practice.</p> <p>9. Resource Utilization: Plans and organizes care based on client needs and provider competencies to assure safe, efficient and cost-effective care.</p>

(3) Nurse I Level 3

Scope: Demonstrates proficiency in practice based on conscious and deliberate planning. Self-directed in goal-setting for managing complex client situations.

EDUCATION	EXPERIENCE	DIMENSION REQUIREMENTS
Associate Degree or Diploma (State approved or NLNAC accredited)	Approximately 2-3 years	<p>1. Practice: Demonstrates proficiency using the nursing process in providing care for clients with complex nursing care needs. Guides and directs others who provide care.</p> <p>2. Quality of Care: Participates in established quality improvement studies and/or activities.</p>
BSN (NLNAC or CCNE accredited)	Approximately 1-2 years	<p>3. Performance: Conducts self-assessment of performance and identifies own learning needs. Assesses performance of others.</p> <p>4. Education/Career Development: Implements an ongoing educational plan to support own professional development.</p>
Master's degree in nursing or related field with a BSN (NLNAC or CCNE accredited)	None	<p>5. Collegiality: Provides feedback regarding the practice of others to improve client care.</p> <p>6. Ethics: Identifies ethical issues in practice and takes appropriate action.</p> <p>7. Collaboration: Refers to, consults with, and makes provision for continuity of care with other health care providers.</p> <p>8. Research: Uses a body of research to validate and/or change own professional practice.</p> <p>9. Resource Utilization: Delegates care in a safe, efficient, and cost-effective manner. Assists clients in identifying and securing appropriate services.</p>

NOTE: Employees at Nurse I must successfully advance through each level of the grade before being promoted to Nurse II.

(4) Nurse II

Scope: Demonstrates leadership in delivering and improving holistic care through collaborative strategies with others.

EDUCATION	EXPERIENCE	DIMENSION REQUIREMENTS
BSN (NLNAC or CCNE accredited)	Approximately 2-3 years	<p>1. Practice: Applies the nursing process to systems or processes at the unit/team/work group level to improve care. Demonstrates leadership by involving others in improving care.</p>
Master's degree in nursing or related field with BSN (NLNAC or CCNE accredited)	Approximately 1-2 years	<p>2. Quality of Care: Initiates/participates in quality improvement activities that result in approved outcomes.</p> <p>3. Performance: Evaluates practice of self and others using professional standards, relevant statutes, and regulations. Takes action to improve performance.</p>
Doctoral degree in nursing or related field (Regionally accredited university or college)	None	<p>4. Education/Career Development: Acquires knowledge and skills to maintain expertise in area of practice. Participates in educational activities to improve clinical knowledge and enhance role performance.</p> <p>5. Collegiality: Educates colleagues and/or students and serves as a preceptor and/or mentor.</p> <p>6. Ethics: Supports and enhances client self-determination. Serves as a resource for clients and staff in addressing ethical issues.</p> <p>7. Collaboration: Uses group process to identify, analyze, and resolve care problems.</p> <p>8. Research: Uses a body of research to validate and/or change work group practice.</p> <p>9. Resource Utilization: Identifies and assesses resource utilization and safety issues, taking appropriate action.</p>

(5) Nurse III

Scope: Executes position responsibilities that demonstrate leadership, experience, and creative approaches to management of complex client care.

EDUCATION	EXPERIENCE	DIMENSION REQUIREMENTS
Master's degree in nursing or related field with BSN (NLNAC or CCNE accredited)	Approximately 2-3 years	<p>1. Practice: Provides leadership in the application of the nursing process to client care, organizational processes and/or systems, improving outcomes at the program or service level.</p> <p>2. Quality of Care: Initiates interdisciplinary projects to improve organizational performance.</p> <p>3. Performance: Uses professional standards of care and practice to evaluate programs and/or service activities.</p>
Doctoral degree in nursing or related field (Regionally accredited university or college)	Approximately 2-3 years	<p>4. Education/Career Development: Implements an educational plan to meet changing program or service needs for self and others. Maintains knowledge of current techniques, trends, and professional issues.</p> <p>5. Collegiality: Coaches colleagues in team building. Makes sustained contributions to health care by sharing expertise within and/or outside the medical facility</p> <p>6. Ethics: Provides leadership in identifying and addressing ethical issues that impact clients and staff, including initiating and participating in ethics consultations.</p> <p>7. Collaboration: Uses the group process to identify, analyze, and resolve care problems.</p> <p>8. Research: Collaborates with others in research activities to improve care.</p> <p>9. Resource Utilization: Manages program resources (financial, human, material, or informational) to facilitate safe, effective, and efficient care.</p>

(6) Nurse IV

Scope: Executes leadership that is characterized by substantial and continuous responsibility and accountability for population groups or integrated programs that cross service and/or discipline lines and influence organizational mission and health care.

EDUCATION	EXPERIENCE	DIMENSION REQUIREMENTS
Master's degree in nursing or related field with BSN (NLNAC or CCNE accredited)	Approximately 4-5 years	<p>1. Practice: Uses an analytical framework, such as the nursing process, to create an environment that facilitates the delivery of care. Coordinates and evaluates integrated programs or demonstrates clinical excellence in management of population groups.</p> <p>2. Quality of Care: Provides leadership in improving and sustaining the quality and effectiveness of care in diverse or complex programs.</p> <p>3. Performance: Implements standards of professional practice and accrediting bodies, and applicable regulations.</p>
Doctoral degree in nursing or related field (Regionally accredited university or college)	Approximately 3-4 years	<p>4. Education/Career Development: Develops staff for career progression. Forecasts new knowledge needs for changing practice environments/population groups. Plans, implements, and evaluates strategies to meet those needs.</p> <p>5. Collegiality: Contributes to the professional growth and development of colleagues and other health care providers at the local, regional, state, or national level.</p> <p>6. Ethics: Provides leadership in addressing ethical issues that impact clients and staff in or beyond the organization and the local health care community.</p> <p>7. Collaboration: Demonstrates leadership in developing productive working relationships with groups in other programs, services, academic settings, and community agencies.</p> <p>8. Research: Collaborates with staff, other disciplines, faculty, and peers in developing, conducting, and evaluating research activities and programs.</p> <p>9. Resource Utilization: Designs, modifies, and implements systems compatible with professional standards and with the mission and goals of the organization to improve the cost-effective use of resources.</p>

(7) **Nurse V**

Scope: Practice of an executive nature, comprised of complex leadership and administrative components, associated with critical health care issues and activities that influence the organizational mission, health care, and policy.

EDUCATION	EXPERIENCE	DIMENSION REQUIREMENTS
Master's degree in nursing or related field with BSN (NLNAC or CCNE accredited)	Approximately 5-6 years	<p>1. Practice: Collaborates with health care executives in creating the organizational mission and vision. Directs the integration of nursing or nursing related activities in the mutual development and achievement of organizational goals.</p> <p>2. Quality of Care: Improves the quality and effectiveness of the facility's overall health care program by providing leadership, coordinating, and facilitating the evaluation and improvement of a wide range of programs. Excellence is reflected in improved client outcomes and organizational performance.</p>
Doctoral degree (preferred) in nursing or related field (Regionally accredited university or college)	Approximately 4-5 years	<p>3. Performance: Develops policy related to professional practice and relevant statutes and regulations on community, regional, and/or national levels.</p> <p>4. Education/Career Development: Mentors others in executive leadership positions. Forecasts knowledge needs for complex multi-system change</p> <p>5. Collegiality: Serves as an expert to communicate nursing and health care trends and issues at the local, regional, state, and/or national level.</p> <p>6. Ethics: Advocates for ethical decision-making on behalf of the public and staff. Develops an environment for ethical decision-making at the organization/system level.</p> <p>7. Collaboration: Collaborates with other executives for strategic planning, decision-making, and problem-solving about health care services and organizational priorities.</p> <p>8. Research: Promotes an environment that supports the conduct and utilization of research in practice and a spirit of inquiry.</p> <p>9. Resource Utilization: Develops resource utilization strategies to improve organizational performance. Strategies reflect the changing societal and health care environments and the economic climate.</p>

4. DEVIATIONS

a. **WAIVER OF NLNAC or CCNE ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENT.** The approving official may authorize a waiver of the requirement for NLNAC or CCNE accreditation of the baccalaureate or master's degree in nursing provided the college or university has regional accreditation and the composite qualifications of the applicant warrant such consideration.

b. **WAIVER OF EXPERIENCE AND/OR DEGREE REQUIREMENTS.** The approving official may authorize a waiver of experience and/or the degree requirements for individuals whose professional accomplishments, performance, and qualifications warrant such consideration based on demonstrated ability to meet the requirements for promotion to the next higher grade or advancement to a higher level within the grade. If a waiver of education requirements above Nurse III level is recommended, the recommendation will be forwarded through the approving official who will forward to the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Nurse Professional Standards Board (NPSB) or Headquarters NPSB (HQ/NPSB), as appropriate. The VISN/NPSB or HQ/NPSB will evaluate the request by using the nine "dimensions" of nursing and scope of assignment. After review, the recommendation of the board will be forwarded to the approving official for a decision.